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ABSTRACT

Theoretical models of social competence suggest that a necessary component of performing socially skillful behavior is the ability to accurately self-monitor the impact of one's behavior and to use this feedback to make adjustments in behavior. These models suggest that less socially competent adolescents may not accurately evaluate the impact of their behavior. This study was conducted to examine the degree of concordance between self- and peer-evaluations of specific social behaviors for liked and disliked ninth graders (N=110; 76 females, 34 males) from two junior high schools. Students completed self- and peer-evaluations of 40 behaviors and a sociometric questionnaire on which students nominated three most liked and least liked peers. The results of data analysis provided some support for the hypothesis that less socially competent adolescents are less accurate in their self-perceptions than are more socially competent adolescents. There was a significant amount of variability among the concordance rates for specific behaviors, perhaps suggesting differences in the saliency of certain social behaviors. Gender differences in the rank order of item agreements were found, suggesting that specific behaviors are differentially more or less salient for each sex. Overall, there was better agreement between self- and peer-reports for females than for males. (NB)

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Agreement Between Adolescent's Self- and Peer-Report of Social Behavior

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Clinical and developmental psychology literatures have devoted increasing attention to adolescent social competence in recent years. Several researchers have proposed theoretical models of social competence that emphasize the importance of social information processing skills. Specifically, these models suggest that a necessary component of performing socially skillful behavior is the ability to accurately self-monitor the impact of one's behavior and to use this feedback to make adjustments in behavior. Thus, it is possible that less socially competent adolescents do not accurately evaluate the impact of their behavior which may, in turn, lead to inaccurate perceptions and self-reports of their behavior. Thus, the primary purpose of the following study was to examine the degree of concordance between self- and peer-reports of specific social behaviors for liked and disliked adolescents.

Additionally, concordance rates were examined for gender differences and differences among specific behaviors.

Method

Subjects: 110 ninth grade students (76 females, 34 males) recruited from two junior high schools participated in the study.

Measures: As part of a larger study, each student completed three questionnaires:

1) the TISS; a self-report questionnaire consisting of 40 behavioral statements (20 positive and 20 negative) which students rate on a 6-point scale
2) the TISS-O; a paper-and pencil measure consisting of the 40 behavioral statements from the TISS which are reworded to describe the behavior of a peer
3) the SFQ; a sociometric questionnaire on which students were required to nominate three most liked and least liked peers from a list of all other participating ninth grade students in their school. Students also nominated three peers who they believed knew them best, which served as the basis for selecting peers to complete the TISS-O.

Procedure: Participating students completed the TISS and the SFQ during a class period. Approximately one week later, all those students matched with another as a "knowledgeable friend" completed the TISS-O on their matched partner.

Results

Data was analyzed by calculating simple overall agreement percentages between self- and peer-report by item and gender (agreement was defined as $\pm$ 1; EXAMPLE- if on item 1, self-report was a 3 on the 6- point scale, peer-report was defined as an agreement for a score of 2, 3, or 4).

Table 1 presents the agreement percentages for individual items. There is a significant degree of variability among concordance rates for specific items. There was not a significant difference between agreement percentages for positive (X=64.9%) vs. negative (X=63.9%) items (t=.59).

Results of analyses of variance indicate a main effect of gender for overall agreement and agreement on positive and negative items. These results indicate that females show greater agreement with peers across items than do males. Data is presented in Table 2.

Table 3 presents a rank order of item agreements by gender. Items that showed the greatest agreement between self- and peer-report for one gender are often one of the lower ranked items for the other gender. For example, males showed the greatest agreement between self- and peer-report on the item, "telling others what to do", whereas this item was ranked 27th (out of 40) for females. Likewise, "hitting others" was the third highest ranked item for females, whereas this item was ranked 36th for the males.

Table 4 presents correlations between agreement percentages and sociometric data (z-scores for positive and negative nominations). These results suggest that adolescents receiving more negative nominations (liked least) showed poorer agreement between their self-report and a peer's report of both positive and negative behavior than did those receiving fewer negative nominations.

Conclusions

Data from this study suggest the following conclusions:

1) Results from the correlations provide some support for the hypothesis that less socially competent adolescents are less accurate in their self-perceptions, and thus, self-reports, than are more socially competent individuals.

2) There is a significant amount of variability among the concordance rates for specific behaviors, perhaps suggesting differences in the saliency of certain social behaviors (i.e., perhaps those items for which the highest agreement percentages were found are those behaviors which are the most salient in the adolescents' social environment).

   However, it is not known what such saliency may be attributed to-the social impact of the behavior, the frequency of the behavior, or some combination of these two or other factors.

3) The gender differences in the rank order of item agreements suggest that specific behaviors are differentially more or less salient for each gender.

4) Overall, there was better agreement between self- and peer-report for females than for males. This finding is consistent with past research demonstrating greater intimacy and knowledge in girls' friendships as compared to boys'.

Table 1
Percent Agreement by Item

Item	% Agreement
ask others to go places	74
do fair share on projects	73
help with homework when asked	73
thank others	71
push others	71
keep secrets	69
ignore compliments	69
offer to share	68
call others bad names	67
hit others	67
make up things to impress	67
tell others are sorry	66
tell others what to do	66
ignore when not interested in talk	66
listen to others problems	66
offer to help w/homework	66
forget to return items	66
make sure all get a turn	65
ignore when told to stop	65
tell jokes	65
throw things when angry	64
get others to do things my way	64
tell how really feel	63
tell the truth	63
ask others for advice	63
lend money	62
monopolize conversations	61
laugh at others mistakes	61
tell others not like way look	61
laugh at others clumsiness	61
offer to loan clothes	60
tell others they are nice	60
flirt with another's boy/girlfriend	59
share my lunch	58
talk only of own interests	57
talk others into doing things	57
ignore others when with best friend	56
lie	56
tell played game well	55
stick up for others	54

NOTE: PERCENTAGES DIFFERING BY 13 POINTS OR MORE ARE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM ONE ANOTHER AT $P \leq .05$.

Table 2

Mean Agreement Percentages by Sex

	Males (n=36)		Females (n=74)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	p
Overall Agreement	55.0	17.9	68.4	16.8	20.8	.000
Positive Item Agreement	55.8	18.7	68.9	17.6	12.9	.001
Negative Item Agreement	54.2	17.2	67.9	16.0	17.0	.000

Table 3
Rank Order of Item Agreements by Sex

Item	Males Rank	Males %	Females Rank	Females %
tell others what to do	1	69	27	65
ask others to go places	2	69	6	76
help w/homework when asked	3	67	5	76
throw things	4	64	31	64
ignore compliments	5	64	12	72
ignore when told to stop	6	64	28	65
ask others for advice	7	64	34	63
offer to help w/homework	8	64	20	68
offer to share	9	64	17	70
forget to return items	10	61	22	68
lie	11	61	39	53
monopolize conversation	12	61	36	61
get others to do things my way	13	61	24	67
offer to loan clothes	14	61	37	58
push others	15	56	4	78
thank others	16	56	2	79
make sure all get turn	17	56	34	63
stick up for others	18	56	40	53
lend others money	19	56	30	65
tell others are nice	20	53	32	64
do fair share on projects	21	53	1	83
call others bad names	22	53	9	74
ignore when not interested in conversation	23	53	11	73
keep secrets	24	53	18	69
tell jokes	25	53	14	71
tell truth	26	50	19	69
laugh at others mistakes	27	50	25	66
tell classmates are sorry	28	50	10	74
make up things to impress	29	50	7	76
tell others played well	30	50	38	58
flirt w/ another's boy/girlfriend	31	47	26	65
ignore others when with best friend	32	47	23	67
tell others how really feel	33	47	15	71
talk others into things	34	47	35	62
listen when others have problems	35	47	8	76
hit others	36	44	3	78
talk only about own interests	37	44	33	64
tell don't like way look	38	44	16	70
share my lunch	39	42	29	65
laugh at clumsiness	40	42	13	71

Table 4
Correlations between Sociometric Data
and Agreement Percentages

	z-positive	z-negative
Overall Agreement	-.11	-.30**
Positive Item Agreement	-.14	-.31**
Negative Item Agreement	-.31**	-.22

** = $p \leq .01$

NOTE: Because a low participation rate in school 1 made the validity of the sociometric data from this school, questionable, correlations involving sociometric data are for school 2 only (n=48).